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REMARKS

Claims 1-58 are pending in the application.

Claims 1-36 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nakagawa et al, (United States Patent 5,819,295, hereinafter "Nakagawa") and Trede et al, (United States Patent 5,873,103, hereinafter "Trede").

The present invention provides for a structured WorkFolder for organizing electronic documents in a self-contained data repository. The WorkFolder comprises sections for grouping related documents, and space-reserving placeholders for indicating documents expected to be placed in the WorkFolder.

In the present invention, a Placeholder 24 is a slot that has been reserved for one or more specific documents not yet created or received. When the WorkFolder is used to organize documents for a given work item, the presence of Placeholder 24 within the WorkFolder indicates to the user that specific documents are expected to be created and stored there.

Amended Base Claim 1 of the present invention recites "...space-reserving placeholders within said workfolder, the placeholder being for new documents expected to be added to said workfolder via said placeholder." (emphasis added).

To establish a prima facie case of obviousness 1) all claim limitations must be taught or suggested; 2) some teaching, motivation or suggestion to combine must be present in a person of ordinary skill in the art or in cited references; and 3) there must be a reasonable expectation of success. In re Vacek, 947 F.2d 488, 20 USPQ2d 1438 (Fed. Cir. 1991). The Office Action at hand states that Nakagawa does not explicitly teach "place holders for reserving a slot." The Office Action further states that Trede teaches "place holders for reserving a slot." The Office Action further states "it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use placeholders to reserve a slot by incorporating the teachings of Nakagawa in Trede as taught by Trede because this facilitates the use of holding a place in a hierarchical file system of folders for managing electronic documents when old versions of documents are stored or moved." Applicants respond accordingly.

The Office Action observes Nakagawa does not explicitly teach, "placeholders for reserving a slot." In Trede, a placeholder denotes a data file and not a slot or reserved space as in

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the present invention. (Col. 2, lines 11-12, Trede). Further in Trede, the placeholder denotes an existing (not new and expected to be added in the future) data file in contrast to the present claimed invention. Trede's data management system provides the capability to move and/or copy the placeholder files (existing data files) from one file server volume to another file server volume, even if the destination file server volume resides on a different file server. The moving and/or copying of placeholder files (existing data files) teaches away from the present invention's creating and storing new documents within a slot (space) of the WorkFolder reserved by a placeholder. (Col. 12, lines 32-39, Trede).

Since all the limitations of amended base Claim 1, including "...space-reserving placeholders within said workfolder, the placeholder being for new documents expected to be added to said workfolder via said placeholder," are not taught, suggested or otherwise made obvious by cited art (Nakagawa and Trede), now Amended Base Claim 1 is believed to be patently distinguishable over the cited art. Therefore, it would have not been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Nakagawa with the teachings of Trede to form the invention of Amended Base Claim 1. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of Amended Base Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

The above remarks regarding Amended Base Claim 1 also apply to dependent claims 2-27 by virtue of the fact, if an independent claim is unobvious under 35 U.S.C. 103, then any claim depending therefrom is unobvious. Therefore, Applicant's respectfully request the withdrawal of the rejection of claims 2-27 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

Amended Base Claim 28 of the present invention recites "...a space-reserving placeholder within said workfolder, the placeholder being for new documents expected to be linked to said workfolder..." (emphasis added).

With respect to claims 28-31, the Office Action states "these claims have been rejected for similar rationale given for claims 1, 2, 18, and 22. Applicants respond accordingly.

As discussed above, neither Nakagawa or Trede imply, suggest or otherwise make obvious "a space-reserving placeholder within said workfolder, the placeholder being for new documents expected to be linked to said workfolder" as in the present invention of Amended Base Claim 28. Rather, as discussed above, Trede's placeholder denotes existing data files and

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not a slot (space) as in the present invention. Further the moving and/or copying of placeholder files (existing data files) teaches away from the present invention's creating and storing new documents within a slot (space) of the WorkFolder reserved by a placeholder.

Since all the limitations of Amended Base Claim 28, including "a space-reserving placeholder within said workfolder, the placeholder being for new documents expected to be linked to said workfolder," are not taught, suggested or otherwise made obvious by cited art (Nakagawa and Trede), Amended Base Claim 28 is believed to be patently distinguishable over the cited art. Therefore, it would have not been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Nakagawa with the teachings of Trede to form the invention of Amended Base Claim 28. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of Amended Base Claim 28 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

The above remarks regarding Amended Base Claim 28 also apply to dependent claims 29-36 by virtue of the fact, if an independent claim is unobvious under 35 U.S.C. 103, then any claim depending therefrom is unobvious. Therefore, Applicant's respectfully request the withdrawal of the rejection of claims 29-36 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

Claim 37 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Trede et al, (United States Patent 5,873,103, hereinafter "Trede").

Amended Base Claim 37 of the present invention recites "...creating at least one space-reserving placeholder within said workfolder, the placeholder being for new documents which may or may not exist at the time of workfolder creation and are expected to be linked to said workfolder via said placeholder."

As discussed above, Trede does not imply, suggest or otherwise make obvious "creating at least one space-reserving placeholder within said workfolder, the placeholder being for new documents which may or may not exist at the time of workfolder creation and are expected to be linked to said workfolder via said placeholder" as in the present invention of Amended Base Claim 37. Rather, as discussed above, Trede's placeholder denotes existing data files and not a slot (space) as in the present invention. Further the moving and/or copying of placeholder files (data files) teaches away from the present invention's creating and storing new documents within a space of the WorkFolder reserved by a placeholder.

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Since all the limitations of Amended Base Claim 37, including "...creating at least one space-reserving placeholder within said workfolder, the placeholder being for new documents which may or may not exist at the time of workfolder creation and are expected to be linked to said workfolder via said placeholder," are not taught, suggested or otherwise made obvious by cited art (Trede), Amended Base Claim 37 is believed to be patentably distinguishable over the cited art. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of Amended Base Claim 37 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

Claims 38-58 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Trede et al, (United States Patent 5,873,103, hereinafter "Trede") in view of Nakagawa et al, (United States Patent 5,819,295, hereinafter "Nakagawa"). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Since Claims 38-58 are dependent on Amended base Claim 37, the above remarks regarding Amended Base Claim 37 also apply to dependent claims 38-58 by virtue of the fact, if an independent claim is unobvious under 35 U.S.C. 103, then any claim depending therefrom is unobvious. Therefore, Applicant's respectfully request the withdrawal of the rejection of claims 38-58 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

Further, with respect to the "Response to Arguments" section in the Office Action at hand, Applicant's thank the Examiner for the thorough comments. The foregoing claim amendments and remarks are aimed at curing the interpretation of the claim language. In particular, the base claims now recite "new documents expected to be added to said workfolder via said placeholder" to mean documents/data files that are initially represented only by a placeholder, such as in accordance with the Examiner's "Response to Arguments" and patentably distinguishes the present invention over the prior art. The Applicant's thank the Examiner for her suggestions during our phone conference on November 28, 2001 which are incorporated herein. Acceptance is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is believed that all claims (Claims 1-58) are in condition for allowance, and it is respectfully requested that the application be passed to

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issue. If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this case, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at (978) 341-0036.

Respectfully submitted,

HAMILTON, BROOK, SMITH & REYNOLDS, P.C.

By Mary Lou Wakimura

Mary Lou Wakimura

Registration No. 31,804

Telephone: (978) 341-0036

Faxsimile: (978) 341-0136

Concord, MA 01742-9133

Dated: 12/4/01

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MARKED UP VERSION OF AMENDMENTSSpecification Amendments Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.121(b)(1)(iii)

Replace the paragraph bridging pages 22 and 23 with the below paragraph marked up by way of bracketing and underlining to show the changes relative to the previous version of the paragraph.

Fig. 13 is an illustration of a conflict mediation dialog box 170 which is presented to a user during a conflict reconciliation procedure. According to a further aspect of the invention, the WorkFolder program preferably does not require locking mechanisms to prevent data conflicts when two or more users update the contents of a WorkFolder concurrently. According to this aspect of the invention, when two users make concurrent changes to a WorkFolder and then save, the changes are analyzed to determine whether they are directly in conflict, or whether the changes can be merged. For example, if user 1 adds a document to a placeholder, while user 2 enters data into an unrelated Address field, the changes are not in conflict and therefore can be merged. When a WorkFolder is saved and a conflict with [another's] another user's changes is detected, i.e., user 1 and user 2 added different documents to the same placeholder, the user whose changes created the conflict (typically the second user to save an updated WorkFolder) is presented with conflict resolution data so that the conflict may be resolved. In this example, the user's changes created two conflicts. As shown, the conflict dialog box 170 indicates the data element that changed 172, the change that was made by the user 174, the conflicting change entered by a previous user 176 and their ID 178. Given this information, the user can then resolve the conflict by [selection] selecting which of the two values to preserve. The selection can be done individually, or the user can indicate that all changes by a given ID be preserved by, e.g., pressing the appropriate function button 180.

Claim Amendments Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.121(c)(1)(ii)

1. (Three times amended) A computer readable memory having a plurality of storage locations for storing records in the computer readable memory, said memory comprising:

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at least one structured workfolder for storing and organizing electronic documents which said documents may or may not exist at the time of workfolder creation;

said workfolder containing a contents [element] node for storing primary data, said contents [element] node containing one or more space-reserving placeholders [for reserving a slot] within said workfolder, each placeholder being for new documents expected to be added to said workfolder via said placeholder.

2. (Amended) The memory of claim 1, wherein said contents [element] node further contains one or more section elements for categorizing said primary data.
6. (Amended) The memory of claim 1, wherein said contents [element] node further contains at least one link to a document.
16. (Amended) The memory of claim 1, wherein said placeholder further comprises a position indicator indicating a position of said placeholder relative to a plurality of other placeholders contained in said contents [element] node.
28. (Three times Amended) A computer readable memory having a plurality of storage locations for storing records in the computer readable memory, said memory comprising:
 - a template used to create one or more [particular instances of a] structured workfolders for storing and organizing electronic documents;
for each structured workfolder, said template containing a contents [element] node; said contents [element] node containing a space-reserving placeholder [for reserving a slot] within said workfolder, the placeholder being for new documents expected to be linked to said workfolder [instance], which said documents may or may not exist at the time of workfolder creation, said documents being linkable subsequent to their creation to said workfolder [instance] via [a particular instance of] said placeholder in said workfolder [instance].

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29. (Amended) The memory of claim 28, wherein said template further comprises a tasks data element for containing one or more tasks which define a set of steps required to complete a unit of work associated with said workfolder [instance], each said task having a name field for indicating a particular task to be performed and a status field for indicating the status of said task.
30. (Amended) The memory of claim 28, wherein said contents [element] node in said template further contains one or more section elements for categorizing data stored in said workfolder [instance], each said section element having a name indicating its intended contents.
35. (Amended) The memory of claim 28, wherein said template further comprises a script element including one or more embedded computer program scripts which provide functions related to said workfolder [instance] when said scripts are executed by a computer.
36. (Amended) The memory of claim 28, wherein said template further comprises a fields element containing form data fields relating to one or more properties relevant to said workfolder [instance].
37. (Three times amended) A method of creating in a computer readable memory a structured workfolder for organizing electronic documents comprising the steps of:
 - creating a structured workfolder root node, said root node containing a contents [element] node for storing primary data therein; and
 - creating at least one space-reserving placeholder [for reserving a slot] within said workfolder, the placeholder being for new documents which may or may not exist at the time of workfolder creation and are expected to be linked to said workfolder via said placeholder.
38. (Amended) The method of claim 37, further comprising the step of creating one or more section elements under said contents [element] node for categorizing said primary data, each said section element having a name indicating its intended contents.